VIZ GRAPHIC NOVEL

RUMIC WORLD TRILOGY

A COLLECTION OF CLASSIC RUMIKO TAKAHASHI SHORT STORIES

VOLUME 1

STORY AND ART BY Rumiko Takahashi

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RUMIC WORLD TRILOGY™

1

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RUMIKO TAKAHASHI

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THOSE SELFISH ALIENS

DAILY GLOBE

JOG JOG JOG JOG

JOG

DAILY GLOBE

YOU THERE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING SO EARLY IN THE MORNING ?

DELIVER-ING NEWS-PAPERS!

WHAT ARE NEWS-PAPERS ?

HUH? YOU KNOW... PRINTED THINGS THAT COME OUT EVERY DAY TO TELL YOU ABOUT EVENTS AND STUFF!

HOW VERY *USE-FUL* !

GLOMP

COME WITH ME !

WHO ARE YOU-- ??

NO ARGUMENTS!

I HAVE RETURNED, NUMBER ONE--!

WELL DONE, NUMBER TWO!

HEY!!

FWAP!

MY PAPERS...

OH NO!

WE ARE ALIEN INVADERS! ARE YOU TERRIFIED ??

UM... ER...

WE ARE ABDUCTING YOU!

NOT NOW, OKAY?

I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF MY PAPER ROUTE!

DAILY GLOBE

HE'S NOT SCARED!

WELL, WE'LL MAKE HIM SCARED!

THE LITTLE BRAT!

SHUNK

SSHH

UNHH!

M-MY... P-PAPERS...

UNCONSCIOUS... BUT NOT SCARED!

A MICROSCOPIC ANTI-MATTER DEVICE...

...WITH THE POWER TO DESTROY THE EARTH!

VRRR

WE SHALL PLANT A BOMB IN HIS BODY!

IF THE HUMANS REFUSE TO SURRENDER... KA-PLOOEY!!

I'LL SET IT TO EXPLODE IF IT'S REMOVED FROM HIS BODY! THERE WILL BE NOTHING THEY CAN DO!

SUSUHHHHH

HEH HEH HEH. OUR ACE IN THE HOLE FOR "OPERATION EARTH" !!

FOR THE PROS-PERITY OF OUR PLANET!

FOP

OPER-ATION COM-PLETE!

"HUBBY'S AFFAIR DRIVES WIFE TO MURDER-SUICIDE" !

GIVE ME THAT! I SHALL TRANS-MIT IT TO THE MOTHER SHIP!

BUMP

YIPES !!

KLAKETA KLAKETA

WE CAN USE IT TO WARN THE HUMANS !

NOW ALL WE NEED TO DO IS ERASE HIS MEMORY AND RELEASE HIM!

WH-- WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING ?!

BA BUM P

WE'RE BEING PULLED TOWARD THE OCEAN!

WE'RE OUT OF CONTROL !!

WAAAA! HELP! HELP!!

UM...

WE'RE BEING SUCKED IN!

BLOOOSH

I'M RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF MY PAPER ROU--

THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR THAT!!

WHAT'S GOING ON, YOU ?!

??

GAK! AN UNDER-WATER CITY !!

BI BI BI

WELL, WELL... WHAT HAVE WE HERE--?

BUT I'LL GET IN TROUBLE.

IF YOU'LL JUST LET ME OUT OF HERE...

DO I LOOK LIKE I CAN LET YOU OUT OF HERE, YOU MORON?!

B- BUT MY PAPERS...

WA HA HA HAA!

WELL, YOU'RE A SPIRITED BUNCH !!

WHISH

EEEE- YOW !!

WE ADMIRE ANY PRISONER WHO CAN KEEP HIS SPIRITS UP EVEN WHEN HE'S SO ABJECTLY HELPLESS!

SO WE WILL HAVE OUR FAVORITE PET TAKE CARE OF YOU!

NOW, SHUT UP !!

I'M AKANE! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

KEI.

I'M NUM-BER ONE!

I'M NUM-BER TWO!

I DIDN'T ASK YOU!

MR. TOYOTA, MR. HONDA, MRS. SUZUKI, MR. KAWA-SAKI, MR. YAMAHA...

MUMBLE MUMBLE

HUH?

...THEY'RE ALL WAITING FOR THEIR PAPERS!

PAPERS?

WILL YOU FORGET THE STUPID PAPERS?!

WHO CARES ABOUT PAPERS?!

BUT I HAVEN'T MADE ONE DELIVERY YET!

BOOT

FEH! WE'RE WASTING OUR TIME WITH THIS IDIOT!

WHAT ARE THOSE CREATURES??

FISH-MEN!

THIS IS THEIR "OPERATION SURFACE WORLD" OFF THE COAST OF TOKYO!

THEY CAUGHT ME A YEAR AGO.

LET'S ESCAPE TO-GETHER!

YOU MAKE IT SOUND EASY!

WA HA HAAAA! RESISTANCE IS FUTILE!

THE OPERATION SHALL BEGIN!

EEE EEK!!

COME HERE, YOU!

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?!

GLUBB

QUIET, PET!

WHAPP

UGHHH!!

DON'T PUSH GIRLS AROUND!

WHUD

K-KEI...

YOU... YOU MAMMAL!

WHAPP

KEI!!

K-KEI...

SWIP

A SMALL SACRIFICE FOR OUR CITY'S EXPANSION!

WITH THIS MICRO-SCOPIC ATMOS-PHERIC EXPLO-SIVE WE CAN DESTROY THE SURFACE WORLD'S AIR!

IF THE HUMANS RESIST US, THIS IS THE PRICE THEY'LL PAY!

YES SIR

FOR THE PROSPERITY OF THE FISH-MEN!

SET IT SO THAT IT WILL EXPLODE IF IT'S TAKEN OUT!

IT IS DONE!

TUG

UMM... CAN I GO HOME NOW?

ONLY AFTER WE ERASE YOUR MEMORY!

YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY A WHILE!

BUT I'M RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE...

...OF MY PAPER ROUTE!!

BOOOMMMM

KKBBAASSHH

WHISH

WOOM

WOOM

HALT!!

WHISH

THE ALARM!

AKANE, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

K-K-KEI?!

HALT !!

HEY, WHAT DID THEY DO TO YOU?

I DON'T KNOW!

PBTH !

WHOOSH

BA BA BOOM

THERE IT IS!

THE ONLY WAY IN IS TO PUSH THAT BUTTON!

WSHH

PPPP

SH PP

NO!

KACHUNG

LIFT-OFF!

WE'LL BLOW 'EM TO BITS AS SOON AS THEY BREAK THE SURFACE!

BR BI PP!

HOW?! THE CONTROL CONSOLE BLEW UP IN THE FIGHT!

BLUR BLE URBLE...

THIS... IS A FLYING SAUCER...

THAT'S RIGHT! WE ARE ALIEN INYADERS! ARE YOU TERRIFIED?

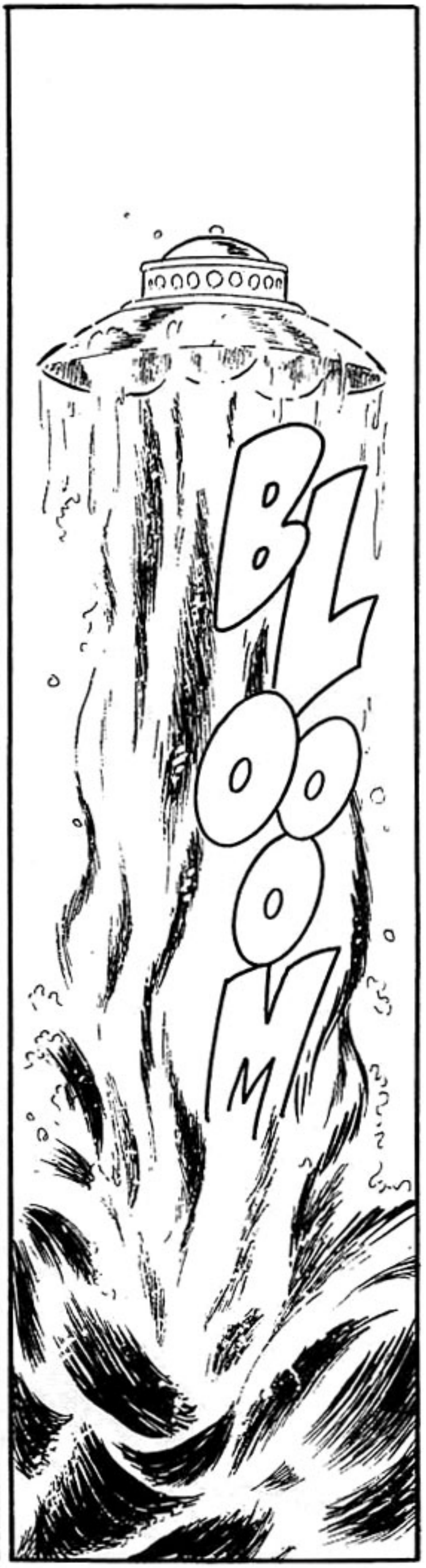
NO WONDER YOU GOT CAUGHT, RIDING IN THIS STUPID THING!

HEY, I SAID WE'RE ALIENS! YOU SHOULD BE AWE-STRUCK!

FOOEY. AFTER THE FISHMEN--I'M SUPPOSED TO GET EXCITED ABOUT A COUPLE OF GEEKS LIKE YOU?

THEY'RE ALL BRATS!

HAVE YOU HUMANS NO INTELLECT AT ALL--?!



WE SHOULD BE SAFE NOW!

GET READY, YOU TWO!

KEH! KEH!

FIRST... YOU! WE'LL ERASE YOUR MEMORY!

HEY, IF NOT FOR HIM YOU'D STILL BE TIED UP!

FOR YOU WE HAVE NO NEED! WE'LL TOSS YOU IN THE OCEAN!

PREPARE TO DIE!

NO!

WHH UDD

LITTLE FOOL!!

KRAK

NYAH! NYAH! MISSED ME!

VISH

KCHK

GLOMP

HEY!

STOP THAT!!

ZAK

ZAK

ZAK

EEE YAAH!

VISHH

NYAH! NYAH!!

KBIBASHH

OW!

OH, NO!

WH-- WHAT'S THE MATTER?

THE... THE...

BOOM

YOU'RE SO COOL!!

UM... YOU...

...YOU REALLY MEAN THAT?

WE CAN'T RELEASE YOU NOW!

WE MUST TAKE YOU TO THE MOTHER SHIP!

THE BOMB CONTROLS GOT BLOWN UP!

BUT YOU'VE GOTTA LOOK COOL, TOO!

L-- LIKE THIS...?

WHAP

THUNK

FWIPP

SQUISH

KUH-LANK

HEY, LOOK! A UFO!

A UFO?!

ERK! WHAT A... SAVAGE FRAY...

OH, WOW!

WHAT DID I ACTUALLY DO...??

YOU BEAT THE ALIENS, STUPID!

YOU'RE SO COOL!!

SQUISH

BE-BUMP BE-BUMP

KA-CHUNK

BOOM!

BOOM!

IT'S COMING DOWN!!

UFO LANDS IN TOKYO!

NO DAMAGE TO NEARBY HOMES AS SAUCER CRASHES IN PARK

ALIENS!

HEY, CHECK OUT THIS LETTER!

BZZZZZZ

FROM OUR READERS

WE WELCOME YOUR OPINION !!

Humans have built spaceships and advanced into space. But there are superior life-forms in space. We think you humans are conceited. We've hidden a bomb somewhere. We'll set it off if you don't do as we say. Please respond.

Sincerely--
The Aliens

HA HA HAA! IT'S GOTTA BE SOME KID PLAYING A JOKE!

GREAT TIMING !

THE ALIEN MOTHER SHIP

THEY IGNORED OUR THREAT, AND NOW THEY'VE CAPTURED OUR MEN!

WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO STRIKE !

TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT SUPPLEMENTAL LABORATORY...

MATSUDO LABS

THIS IS IT!

HE WAS BROUGHT HERE...

Tp Tp Tp Tp

LAB 1

MR. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, THE LEGALITY OF THIS...

I'LL WORRY ABOUT LEGALITIES, DR. MATSUDO. YOU WORRY ABOUT THAT MICROSCOPIC ATOMIC BOMB THAT YOU'RE SO FAMOUS FOR...

I WANT THAT BOMB IN HIM SO THAT WHEN WE SEND HIM BACK TO THAT SPACESHIP... HEH HEH!

YES, YES, BUT... I COULD SWEAR HE'S *HUMAN!*

PINCH

THE PAPERS SAY HE'S AN ALIEN... SO HE MUST BE!

WELL, YES... I SUPPOSE SO... *HA HA HAA!*

TRUTH

OF COURSE, DOCTOR! *HA HAA HAAAA !!*

IT'S FOR THE SURVIVAL OF EARTH, DOCTOR!

WHAT ARE THEY DOING IN THERE ?

LOOK OVER THERE!

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.

CHK

TRUTH

NO, LOOK OVER THERE!

KEI, WHAT DID THEY DO TO YOU?

HUH? UMM... ER...

YOU ARE ALL RELEASED! YOU MAY GO BACK TO YOUR SPACESHIP!

BUT WE'RE NOT ALIENS!

I HAVE TO DELIVER MY PAPERS!

YOU'RE NOT GOING ANY-WHERE!!

BOOM

WE'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU!

HAND OVER THE KID TO US!

SO! MORE ALIENS, EH-- ?!

JERK

DON'T YOU DARE CONFUSE THEM WITH US!

WE ARE THE FISHMEN KAMIKAZE CORPS!

WOULD YOU GUYS GET A LIFE ?!

LEAVE KEI ALONE !!

WE CAN'T LET THOSE FISH HAVE HIM!

FOR ONCE I'M WITH YOU!

FIGHT, KEI! ARE YOU A MAN OR AREN'T YOU?!

W-WELL, I...I GUESS...

TAKE HIM ALIVE !!

KA BA BOOM

RRRRRMMMMM

KRAK KRAK

ACK !!

WAK !!

HEY! THE KID'S GONE!

WHAT ??

FIND HIM AND CATCH HIM-- ALIVE !!

THE MOTHER SHIP! IT'S COME TO SAVE US !!

DANG IT, WILL YOU LOOK AT WHAT YOU DID TO MY LAB ?!

CALL THE HEADS OF THE FISH !

WE MUST CATCH HIM FIRST !!

HEY, I WANNA DO SOME-THING BOLD TOO !

CALL OUT THE ARMY !!

BOOOOM

WE ARE TOUGH

WE ARE MEN

BRRRRR

CATCH OF THE DAY

BOOSH

KA BOOOOM

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

HUH?

WOOSH

YOU HIDE HERE!

I'M THE ONE THEY'RE AFTER!

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

AKANE, I...

...I HAVE TO DELIVER THOSE PAPERS!

KEI!

KABOOOO

BE CAREFUL! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

GET THAT KID!

VRBOOOOOOM

STEP ASIDE

41

37564

HEY, THERE'S THE GIRL!

BOOM BOOM

STEP ASIDE

VRROARRRR

WHERE DID THE KID GO? TALK, YOU!

TRY AND MAKE ME!

TALK OR WE'LL BLOW HIM UP!!

HUH ??

"BLOW HIM UP"?

DID YOU JUST SAY, "BLOW HIM UP"?

HE SAID IT!

YOU SAID IT, TOO!

A-WA HA HA HA HAA!

Y-YOU MEAN WE ALL...?

WHAT A COINCI-DENCE!

WA HA HA HA!

....

....

WAIT A MINUTE...

...DO YOU MEAN TO TELL ME...

...YOU ALL PUT A BOMB IN HIM?!

I HAVE TO HURRY!

I CAN STILL MAKE IT FOR THE EVENING EDITION!

KA

BOOM

BOOM

KE!!

STOP THE ATTACK !!

IF ONE EXPLODES, IT'LL TRIGGER THE REST !!

THERE'LL BE A FUSION OF DESTRUCTIVE ENERGIES, RESULTING IN...

$$E(x,y,z) = \phi \cdot m_0 \{1-(vc^{-1})^3\}^{1/3} \iiint_A \rho \, dx \, dy \, dz = 0$$

AND THEN... OH, MY GRACIOUS !

SAY IT IN ENGLISH !!

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN ?!?

THE WHOLE UNIVERSE WILL BE DESTROYED !!

DING

TOK TOK TOK TOK

THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR MESSING WITH A HUMAN LIFE!

YOU THINK KEI'S A GUINEA PIG ?!

WELL... HA HA... AT LEAST OUR CONTROL DEVICE IS BROKEN, SO OUR BOMB WON'T BLOW UP BY ITSELF!

YOU'RE KIDDING ! OURS IS BROKEN, TOO !

YOURS IS REMOTE CONTROLLED TOO, ISN'T IT, DR. MATSUDO?

WELL... YES...

THEN THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!

WA HA HA HA

ALL LIVING THINGS CAN BE FRIENDS!

LET'S FORGET OUR DIFFER-ENCES AND WORK TOGETHER!

WUMP

...EXCEPT IT'LL BLOW UP IF HE DIES.

I SET IT UP SO THAT IT WILL DETONATE IF HIS HEART STOPS.

TH-THEN IF ANYTHING KILLS THAT IDIOT...

...IT KILLS THE UNI-VERSE.

AFTER HIM! PROTECT THAT KID!

HUFF HUFF

MAN... ALL THIS RUN-NING...

...MAKES MY CHEST HURT!

HUFF HUFF HUFF

GYAAA!!

DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT!

YOU ALMOST GAVE ME A HEART ATTACK!

OOOH, MY HEART!

KOMP

FSHP

BAABUMMPP

KEI, YOU HAVE--

DON'T TELL HIM! HE'LL DIE OF SHOCK!

YOUNG MAN, COME WITH ME!

WILL YOU QUIT BOTHERING ME--!?!

DELIVERING NEWS-PAPERS IS MY LIFE!

OOOOOO!

WHY ARE THEY SO HELPFUL ALL OF A SUDDEN?

I GUESS THEY LIVE TO DELIVER NEWSPAPERS TOO!

SQUAD NUMBER THREE! HE'S HEADING TOWARD THE SECOND BLOCK ON HIS PAPER ROUTE!

BLOCK OFF THE STREET! DON'T LET ONE CAT STRAY INSIDE!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU WON'T TRIP, WILL YOU ??

GOODWILL

UNITY

FRIEND-SHIP

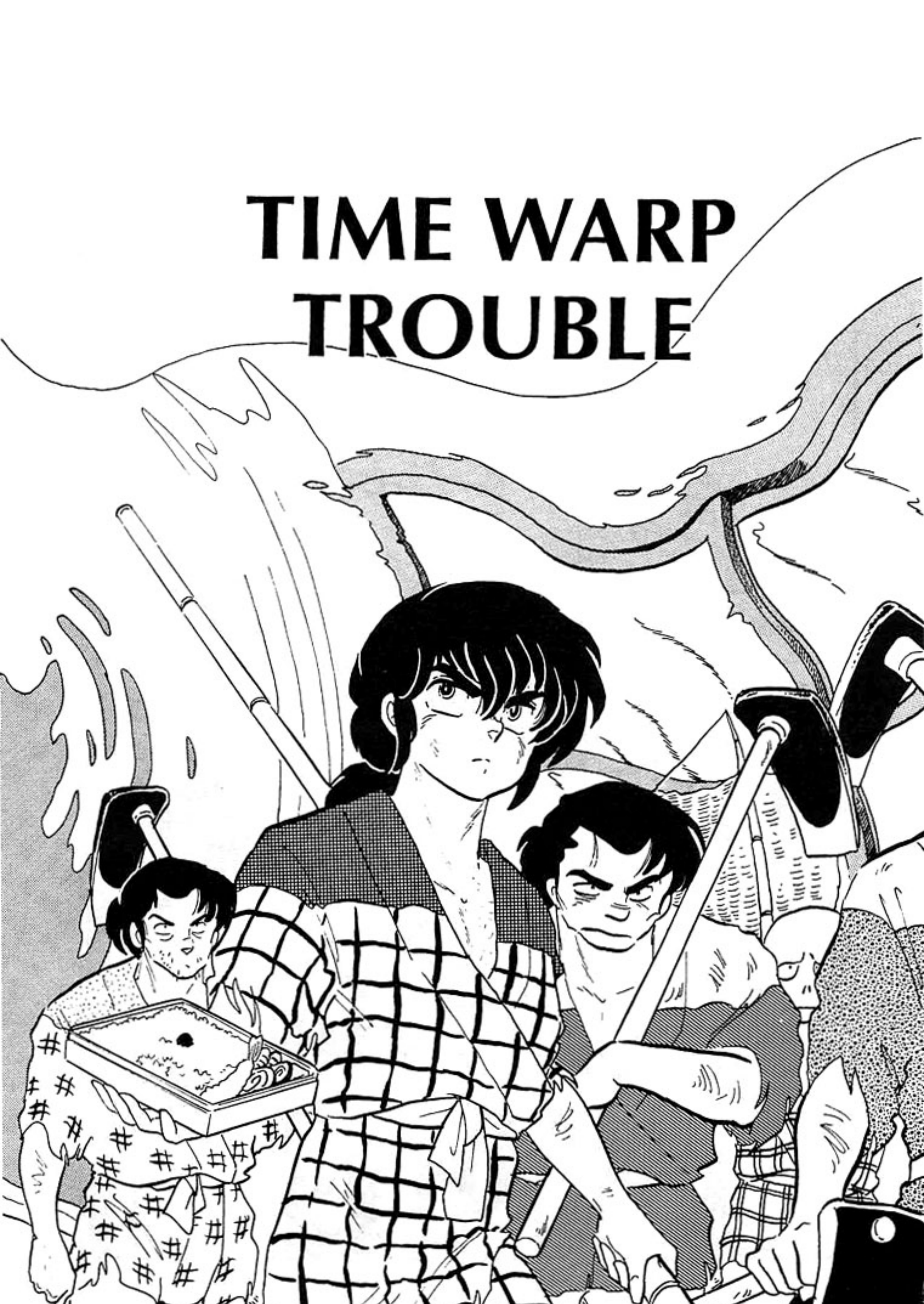
THOSE SELFISH ALIENS !!

Joy

Peace

END

TIME WARP TROUBLE



BELLYFUL HIGH SCHOOL-- SATURDAY, LUNCH PERIOD...

Cafeteria

Chemistry

FAMINE!

WAKE UP, PEOPLE!

WITHIN THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS, THIS COUNTRY WILL FACE AN AGRICULTURAL CRISIS!

IN PREPARATION, IT IS OUR DUTY AS THE CHEMISTRY CLUB TO DEVELOP FERMENTATION TECHNOLOGY, IMMEDIATELY!

WHAT'S HE IN SUCH A RUSH ABOUT *THIS* TIME?

OH, YOU KNOW... IN HISTORY CLASS WE TALKED ABOUT FAMINES...

...AND THEN THE TEACHER SAID SOMETHING ABOUT SOMETHING WRONG WITH OUR GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT POLICIES...OR SOMETHING...

IMPROVING FERMENTATION TECHNIQUES TO INCREASE THE ABSORPTION OF NUTRIENTS WILL HAVE THE SAME IMPACT ON FAMINE AS INCREASING THE FOOD SUPPLY!

HE GETS KINDA WORKED UP SOMETIMES, HUH?

YEAH, LIKE EVERY OTHER DAY!

MINORU, YOU'RE A PIG! PUT YOUR LUNCH DOWN!

SHUT UP! I'M DEMONSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF APPRECIATING OUR DIMINISHING FOOD SUPPLY!

OH, RIGHT! IT'S HOGS LIKE YOU WHO CAUSE FAMINES!

YOU'VE GOT NO VISION! I CAN DO EXPERIMENTS EVEN WHILE I'M EATING! SEE...?

HEY, DON'T PUT THAT IN THERE--!

BOOOOM

AUGH! MY EYES!

KOFF! KOFF!

YOU MORON!

FEH! I'M NOT GOING TO LET A LITTLE EXPLOSION RUIN MY LUNCH!

!?

PETITION

MY GOD!!

WH-WH-WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?!

PETITION

S-SOME-THING... SMELLS... GOOD!

IT'S FOOD! FOOD !!

FEED US

HEY!

WHAK

MY LUNCH !

ON-WARD, MEN !

ON-WARD !!

GIVE MY LUNCH BACK, THIEF!

GYAH !!

HELP ME! HELP ME!!

KABOOM

SO HE GOES...

YRRROOOOOM

FOOD !!

BOOM

YOW !!

AAAAA!

cafeteria

BREAD

FOOD !!

BOOOOOM

EEEEEK!!

LUNCH THIEF! LUNCH THIEF!

LOOK WHO'S TALKING, MINORU!

BREAD-NAPPERS !!

WHO ARE YOU ?!

THE DEFEND-ERS OF UENO VILLAGE!

OH, FOOD! FOOD !!

HELP!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE-- ?!

IT'S THE CHEM CLUB...AT LEAST I THINK SO!

I NEVER FIGURED YOU GEEKS TO JOIN THE DRAMA CLUB!

THIS ISN'T A PLAY!

WE HEAR AN EXPLOSION... THE LAB'S EMPTY WHEN WE GET THERE...

...AND YOU'RE OUT HERE MAKING SAMURAI MOVIES?!

YOU'D BETTER HAVE AN EXPLANA-TION, MINORU!

IF YOU WANT ANSWERS, ASK ME!

GAAAK! EVERYBODY TO THE FACULTY ROOM!

FACULTY ROOM

WHAT'S GOING ON?

THE CHEM CLUB STARTED A RIOT!

NOW, WHO'S GOING TO EXPLAIN THIS ?!

STUDENT FILES

WE WERE PREPARING FOR AN AGRICULTURAL CRISIS...

THERE'S NOT A BLADE OF GRASS LEFT IN OUR VILLAGE...

AND BY DEVELOPING FERMENTATION CHEMISTRY...

EVERYONE WILL DIE UNLESS WE FIGHT... OR RIOT... OR SOMETHING...

THIS TRAGEDY MUST BE AVERTED !!

SO... IT'S A PLOT !!

HA HA HA

A SHORTAGE OF FOOD IS THE GREATEST PROBLEM HUMANITY FACES!

BUT WE HAVE THE WORLD'S WORST AGRICULTURAL POLICY!

AT THIS RATE, WE'LL HAVE TO RESORT TO CANNIBALISM !

BREATHE DEEPLY, SIR... AND LISTEN!

GRR!

WE HAVE NO MORE IDEA HOW THESE PEOPLE CAME HERE THAN YOU DO!

YOU KNOW, WHERE THERE'S FOOD... THERE'S *MORE* FOOD!

IT'S AS IF THE TENMEI FAMINE DIDN'T EXIST!

WHAT--?! THE *TENMEI* ERA FAMINE?!

THAT'S THE ONE SET OFF BY THE MT. ASAMA ERUPTION OF 1783...

...OUR BIGGEST FAMINE EVER.

IT REDUCED THE POPULATION OF JAPAN BY 920,000.

DON'T BE STUPID! HOW COULD PEOPLE FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BE HERE NOW?!

HEY! LOOK AT THOSE TWO! LOOK *CLOSELY!*

YEAH! THEY LOOK KIND OF ALIKE!

THEY'D LOOK EXACTLY ALIKE IF MINORU LOST WEIGHT AND TURNED HANDSOME!

HEY, WATCH IT--!

BUT NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...

HE MUST BE YOUR ANCES-TOR !

MY GOD, EAT! EAT! IF YOU STARVE TO DEATH, I'LL NEVER BE BORN!

F-F- FOOD ?!?

THAT DOES IT!!

KONKK

THE TENMEI FAMINE?! ANCESTORS?! SPARE ME!!

BUT LOOK AT 'EM !

SO WHY ARE THEY HERE, HUH??

UM...

I'VE KEPT QUIET BECAUSE IT SEEMED TOO FANTAS-TIC...

BUT MAYBE THAT EXPLOSION TORE A RIFT IN THE TIME CONTINUUM-- OPENED A HOLE INTO THE FOURTH DIMENSION, AND THEY WERE SUCKED THROUGH!

MAKES SENSE TO ME.

OF COURSE, OF COURSE.

OKAY, YEAH, YEAH...

...A HOLE IN THE FOURTH DIMEN-SION!

CALL THE POLICE !!

YOU SAID IT!

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE THIS MOB OF MOOCHING BUMS IN BAD KABUKI COSTUMES LOCKED UP, THAT'S WHAT!

ILLEGAL ASSEMBLY, BRAN-DISHING WEAPONS, DISTURBING THE PEACE, LARCENY, UNLAWFUL ENTRY, AND ASSAULT!

PLEASE, DON'T HAND US OVER! ANYTHING BUT THAT !

HEY, GET YOUR FILTHY PAWS OFF ME !

I MUST TAKE THIS TO MY WIFE AND CHILDREN, WHO WAIT FOR ME, STARVING!

IS THAT MY PROB-LEM ?!

WAK!

HOW CRUEL !

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THEM TO THE POLICE!

THESE PEOPLE ARE HUNGRY!

AND HOW COULD A BUNCH OF HOMELESS PEOPLE JUST APPEAR LIKE THAT?!

AREN'T SCHOOLS SUPPOSED TO TEACH US VALUES?

QUIET!! DO YOU ALL WANT TO BE EXPELLED?!

DON'T YOU HAVE ANY HEART AT ALL?!

HOW CAN YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUNGRY?!?

FWAK

THIS'LL BE US IN FIFTY YEARS!

AW-RIGHT!

THEN YOU'LL KNOW THE STING OF HEART-LESS-NESS!

WHUMP

OUR ANCESTORS SUFFERED SO WE COULD PROSPER!

YOU HAVE A SURPLUS! YOU CAN SPARE A LITTLE!

WE MUST PAY OUR DEBT TO THE FAMINE VICTIMS OF THE PAST BY GIVING SUCCOR TO THESE HUNGER-RACKED REFUGEES!

BLESS YOU! BLESS YOU!!

THERE ARE RULES AGAINST THIS.

WHAT A HERO!

WOW, MINORU! YOU ACTUALLY CAN MAKE SENSE!

NOW I KNOW IGNORANCE IS COURAGE.

HEY, WHO'S THE HERO HERE?!

OH, YOUNG FRIENDS...

HOW SWEET TO LEARN THAT THERE IS NOBILITY IN YOUR ERA...

THANK FATE FOR BRINGING US HERE!

NOW, BACK TO THE VILLAGE!

UM... HOW DO YOU PLAN TO DO THAT?

THE WAY WE CAME!

YEAH...YEAH! TAKE US TO THIS "RIFT," BOYS!

BUT...BUT WHAT IF IT'S GONE?

IF THE HOLE IS ONLY A TEMPORARY PHENOMENON CAUSED BY THE BLAST...

Chemistry

EITHER YOU GO THROUGH A RIFT...OR YOU GO TO JAIL! AND NO MORE CHEM CLUB!

NEVER FEAR.

LOOK!

HUH?

AK!

THERE REALLY IS A RIFT!

WHAT IS THE MEAN-ING OF THIS-- ?!?

IT WASN'T LIKE THIS BEFORE!

FAREWELL, FOR NOW! BUT WE'LL BE BACK...

WH- WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THEM?!

DO I HAVE TO EXPLAIN THE WHOLE THING AGAIN?!

GOOD-BYE!

WERE THEY REALLY FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY?

SEEMED LIKE THEY WEREN'T SURPRISED TO BE HERE AT ALL!

HE SAID... THEY'LL COME AGAIN...

...THROUGH THIS RIFT...

MINORU'S A FINE YOUNG MAN.

HE'S YOUR ANCES-TOR, AFTER ALL!

BUT THEY WERE THE ONES WHO DESTROYED THEIR AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES WITHOUT A THOUGHT FOR THEIR DESCENDANTS... FOR *US!*

THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO CROSS THE RIFT MORE OFTEN...

...UNTIL THEY'VE PAID THEIR DEBT!

INDEED.

HOME AGAIN...

THE FIFTH YEAR OF THE "NEW TENMEI ERA"... 2053!

THE GROSS FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY RATE HAS DROPPED TO .01 PERCENT...

...AND ALL AVENUES FOR IMPORTATION HAVE COLLAPSED.

EVERYONE, REJOICE! WE'VE FOUND A WAY TO GET FOOD!

END

FWOOSH
SHHKK
KRAK!
SHH
FSSSSSSS
BWAAA

SUZU!

SUZU! ARE YOU IN THERE??

SWISH

SNAP

SHHH

SHUKUMARU! HELP!

TUG

KRAK

FWOOSH

KR AA

SUZU!!

TUG

FIRE TRIPPER

BRRRT
TAKA
TAKA
TAKA
ACE
Construction
TING
WHAT THE--?! THERE'S A LITTLE GIRL DOWN THERE!
ARE YOU ALONE? WHERE'S YOUR MOM, SWEET-HEART?
WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, KID?
WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

TWIG

TWIG

OOH!

CHECK IT OUT!

SHUHEI!

OH!

OOOOH!

SUZUKO!

LOOK! LOOK!

WHY ARE YOU SHOWING THOSE BOYS YOUR BELLY?

I HAD AN OPERATION FOR APPLE-CITIS!

NEAT, HUH?!

LET'S SEE.

OH, I THINK YOU MEAN APPENDI-CITIS.

THE DOCTOR SAID IT WAS *ACUTE* APPENDICITIS.

DID YOU CRY?

NO! I DIDN'T!

I *NEVER* CRY!

OKAY! I BELIEVE YOU!

LET'S GO HOME. YOU JUST GOT OUT OF THE HOSPITAL AND SHOULDN'T BE RUNNING AROUND.

SO, LIKE, YOU CAME OUT JUST TO SHOW THEM YOUR SCAR? WAS IT SUPPOSED TO IMPRESS THEM?

YEAH! I HAD AN OPERATION FOR *APPENDI-CITIS!*

ISN'T THAT IMPRES-SIVE?

I'M AN ORDINARY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT--

ON THAT FATEFUL DAY, I TOOK THE HAND OF MY NEIGHBOR'S KID, SHUHEI--

YOUR MOM MUST BE WORRIED ABOUT YOU RIGHT NOW!

AH-- DON'T SWEAT IT!

THEN...

TING

DID YOU KNOW I WENT IN AN AMBULANCE?

HEY! THAT SMELL-- LIKE A GAS LEAK--

WHAT ?!

FYUUUUUU

UH...

WHA- WHAT HAPPENED--?

OH... RIGHT... EXPLO- SION...

A GAS EXPLO- SION!

UH... ??

HY

UUUUUUUU

WHA-WHAT THE--?

WHERE AM I?

EXCUSE ME, SIR. I...

AAH!

HE'S D-D-DEAD!

DID ALL THESE PEOPLE...

...DIE IN THAT GAS EXPLO--?

NO. THAT CAN'T BE IT.

BUT, WHERE AM I...??

EEE

HEH HEH HEH-- A WOMAN!

GIMME THEM LEGS!

EEEEEEEEE!!

RAAH!

SHAK SHAK

SHAK

HFF HFF HFF

YAH!

EAP

NO!

EEE-
EEE-
EEEE!
HELP ME!
MOM!

SHUKK
GUKK!
KASHING
SHUUUSH
SHUKK

SHORK

SPORK

KA

SHING

CLACK

EEEEEE

AAAHHH

NNUH! DON'T KILL ME! STOP!

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!

I JUST SAVED YOU! LET GO!

SHUKU-MARU!

WHO'S THE GIRL?

HMM... STRANGE CLOTHES. WHAT'S THIS, THEN?

WHAP

FREAK!

BITCH! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!

EEEEK!

STOP IT!!

H-HEY, SHUKUMARU! AREN'T THESE RED HORSE'S MEN?

YEAH.

DAMN! WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN NOW? ISN'T HE GONNA COME AFTER US?

FOOL! WE'LL NEVER MAKE A LIVING BEING AFRAID OF THAT SCUM!

THEIR CART'S OVER THERE!

GOOD! LET'S STEAL IT AND HEAD ON HOME!

COME ON! HOW LONG YOU GONNA SIT THERE?

OI, SHUKU-MARU!

TING

YOU GONNA TAKE HER WITH YOU?

HELL, YES! I FOUND HER!

YAHOO! LOOK AT ALL THIS RICE!

BTAN BTAN

HA! THEY MUST'VE RAIDED A VILLAGE AGAIN!

BTAN

THOSE BASTARDS! THEY DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT *HUMAN* LIFE!

WHERE ARE WE... ??

HUH?

WHERE EXACTLY ARE WE?

TING

ON A CART, WHERE ELSE?

WHAT TIME IS THIS?

YOU SOME KIND OF IDIOT? IT'S *NIGHT* TIME!

BE SERIOUS!

UH-- COULD YOU LET ME OFF? I HAVE TO GO HOME NOW.

BTAN

BTAN

AH!

KA-SHING

WUMPF

LOOK OUT!! YOU'LL GET HURT!

A BELL...

RRUMBLE

IT'S SHUKU-MARU!

SHUKUMARU'S BACK!

SKREEE

BTAN

....

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY...? DURING THE CIVIL WAR?

SO... YOU'VE MADE IT BACK.

KASHING

HELLO, FATHER.

EY?

WHO'S THE GIRL?

OH... YOU MEAN *THIS* GIRL?

AH... I HAVEN'T EVEN ASKED YOU YOUR NAME YET.

WHAT ??

YOUR NAME. HAVEN'T YOU GOT ONE?

SU--

SUZUKO...

SHUKU-MARU!

AH, SUZU!

HAVE YOU BEEN A GOOD GIRL?

I HAVE A PRESENT FOR YOU.

HERE YOU GO!

TING

TING TING TING

...SO, THESE ARE THE REASONS...

WE'VE DECIDED TO MAKE A FENCE AROUND THE VILLAGE, STARTING TO-MORROW.

ANY QUES-TIONS?

HEADMAN, ARE YOU SURE RED HORSE'S MEN WILL RAID THIS VILLAGE?

WITHOUT A DOUBT.

AND ALL BECAUSE OF YOU! WHAT AN IDIOT, TAKING WHAT THOSE BANDITS HAD STOLEN!

AYE, SHUKU-MARU!

YOU COME OUT LOOKING JUST AS BAD AS THEY DO!

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THIS VILLAGE'S PROTECTOR!

NOBODY ASKED YOU TO STEAL!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

YOU ALL LIVE COMFORTABLY BECAUSE OF WHAT WE'VE TAKEN!

YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN THOSE THIEVING SCUM!

B-B-BUT...

ANYWAY, WE CAN'T CHANGE WHAT YOU'VE ALREADY DONE.

WHO'S THAT GIRL?

SHUKUMARU BROUGHT HER HERE.

WHAT KIND OF CLOTHES *ARE* THOSE?

WAS IT SOME KIND OF TIME SLIP?

BE-CAUSE OF THE ENERGY RE-LEASED BY THAT GAS EXPLO-SION?

I WANT TO TAKE A BATH...

WHEN I WAKE UP...

I HOPE I'M BACK IN MY OWN TIME...

KTOON KTOON KTOON

KTOON KTOON KTOON

PTWEET

KTOON KTOON

TING TING TING

HELLO...

ARE YOU GOING TO BECOME MY BROTHER'S WIFE?

WHAT--?!

MY BROTHER SAID HE WAS GOING TO MAKE YOU HIS WIFE!

...../

ARE YOU... SHUKU-MARU'S SISTER?

YEAH! MY NAME IS SUZU! I'M GOING TO BE SHUKUMARU'S WIFE, TOO!

I SEE YOU'RE UP.

OH-- SHUKU-MARU!

OKAY, COME ON!

WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU--

SPLOOSH

GLUB!

SPLISH

SPLASH SPLASH

GUH-- WHAT-- STOP IT!!

UM HMM! WHEN YOUR FACE IS CLEAN, YOU'RE RATHER PRETTY.

NO, IT CAN'T BE. IS HE REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT MARRYING ME??

NOW, LET'S GET YOU SOME NEW ATTIRE!

SHAAK

WE'VE GOT TONS OF CLOTHES IN HERE!

PICK OUT WHAT-EVER YOU LIKE!

HOW DID YOU GET SO MANY... ??

WE DIDN'T STEAL THEM! WE JUST STRIPPED THEM OFF A FEW CORPSES.

CORPSES!?

NO!!

I CAN'T WEAR CLOTHES THAT WERE TAKEN OFF OF DEAD PEOPLE!

HOW COULD I--??

WHAA-AAAT ?!?

WAIT A MINUTE!

THIS SHIRT...

I NEVER CRY!

OKAY! I BELIEVE YOU!

THIS SHIRT BELONGS TO SHU-HE!!

HOW DID YOU GET THIS?!

HUH?

WHAT'S THAT-- ?!?

A LITTLE BOY WAS WEARING THIS!

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS...

I NEVER TOOK IT!

SHUHEI MUST'VE COME HERE WITH ME...

I HAVE TO FIND HIM!

SUZUKO, WAIT!

SHOOM

HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING??

SHU-HE!!

WHAT THE HELL'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?!

I HAVE TO GO! SHUHEI IS AROUND HERE SOME-WHERE!

PLEASE! TAKE ME BACK TO WHERE YOU FOUND ME YESTER-DAY!

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WE ALREADY TOOK EVERYTHING VALUABLE WE COULD FIND!

FINE! I'LL GO THERE BY MYSELF!

FOOL! DO YOU WANT THOSE *BANDITS* TO GET YOU?!

BUT HE'LL *DIE* IF WE DON'T FIND HIM SOON!

HYUUUUUUUUUUUU

CAN'T TAKE THIS...

THERE'S NO KID AROUND HERE!

HE MUST BE CLOSE BY... HE MUST...

LOOK! IT'S ALL GROWN MEN! THERE'S NO DEAD CHILDREN AROUND HERE!

SHUT UP! SHUHEI IS STILL ALIVE!!

SCARY...

SHU-HEI!

HEY, SUZUKO-- LET'S HAVE SOME LUNCH.

NO. I DON'T FEEL LIKE EATING RIGHT NOW.

GRRROWL

HUNGER-- IT DOESN'T CARE ABOUT YOUR EMOTIONAL STATE! IT ATTACKS ANYWAY!

WHAT'S THIS... ??

HAVEN'T YOU HAD MILLET BEFORE?

.....

YUK! IT TASTES AWFUL!

GULP

HERE. HAVE SOME.

UH...

OH, NO... THIS IS LIKE AN INDIRECT KISS.

DON'T YOU WANT IT?

OKAY. I'M THIRSTY.

!!

LIE DOWN!

PLEASE, DON'T BE SO ROUGH!

HUSH!

HYUUUUUUUUU

WHO IS HE?

RED HORSE'S MAN...

HE'S A FRIEND OF THE BANDITS WHO ATTACKED YOU YESTERDAY.

HE'S LOOKING FOR THEM.

THE BANDITS YOU KILLED?

CLOP CLOP CLOP

YEAH.

BREET BREET

KTOON KTOON

SHU-HEI!

AH! I'LL TAKE THIS ONE, TOO!

WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO SHUKU-MARU?

HE'S BEEN SPENDING ALL HIS TIME WITH THAT GIRL... FOR FIVE DAYS NOW.

THEY TAKE A LUNCH AND WALK AROUND THE BATTLE-FIELD TOGETHER.

HA HA-- WHAT A STRANGE COURT-SHIP!

OI, SHUKU-MARU! YOU HAVE FUN??

SHUT UP! YOU GOT IT ALL WRONG!

HA HA HA HA

WHAT ?!

YOU MEAN TO TELL ME YOU HAVEN'T BEDDED THAT WENCH YET?!

YOU SOME KIND OF COWARD?

SHUT UP, YOU GUYS!

IT JUST ISN'T THE RIGHT TIME.

SUZUKO IS GOING CRAZY LOOKING FOR THAT KID.

WHAT A STUPID EXCUSE!

I'LL BET YOU'RE SCARED OF WOMEN, AREN'T YOU??

WHAHAHAHA

SHUT UP!!

I'M DIFFER-ENT!

YOU MAY RUN AROUND LIKE WILD DOGS, BUT I'M CIVILIZED. I'M NOT AN ANIMAL LIKE YOU GUYS!

HEY! WHERE YOU GOIN'?

SHUT UP!!

FAP

GLUG GLUG GLUG

BREEP BREEP

SHHUNT

SHHUNT

WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? IT'S LATE.

SHUKU-MARU ...??

SUZU-KOOOO...

FWUMP

W-WAIT!!

I'M GONNA SHLEEP HERE TONIGHT...

WH- WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT--?!

YOU'RE DRUNK! OH, MY GOD...

SO?! WHASS WRONG WITH THAT?

NO! STOP!

SHUT UP! DO WHAT I TELL YOU!

CRASH

TTUD

GULP

THUD

ZZZZZZZZZZZZ

.....

ZZZZZZ

SZARKIZZ

HOW STUPID!

OOOH-- MY HEAD!

SUZUKO... HOW DID I END UP IN YOUR SHED LAST NIGHT? I MEAN, I WOKE UP AND...

ASK YOURSELF THAT QUESTION.

I'M ASKING *YOU!* I HAVE NO IDEA!

FOOL!

AW-- IT'S NO GOOD.

THIS HEAD-ACHE IS KILLING ME.

SUZUKO, THIS WAY!

EH...?

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

SSHHHHH

OH!

THE WATER'S SO CLEAR...

SPLOOSH

HAH

I WISH I COULD TAKE A BATH...

GO AHEAD. I WANT TO TAKE A REST.

.....

WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?

NO, I'LL PASS.

ESPECIALLY AFTER WHAT YOU TRIED TO DO LAST NIGHT.

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT'D I DO?

ARE YOU SAYING I'M SOME KIND OF PERVERT??

.....

YOU PROMISE YOU WON'T WATCH?

WILL YOU GIVE ME YOUR WORD?

I WON'T LOOK! I PROMISE!

AHH-
HH-
HHH...

SHHH

SPLASH

HEY, SUZUKO!

DON'T LOOK!

WHAT A CYNICAL GIRL!

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?

.....

...SOME-WHERE FAR AWAY...

WELL, THAT KID... WHAT'S HIS NAME...

...IS HE YOUR SON?

WHAT!? ARE YOU SAYING I LOOK LIKE A MOTHER?!

A MOTHER! HUH?! NO... NOT AT ALL...

.....

I TOLD YOU NOT TO LOOK!

SPLASH

YOU LIED!!

WHAK

WAH!

HUFF! HUFF! YOU SCARED ME!

WHAT KIND OF WOMAN ARE YOU?!

HMF!

SHUKU-MARU! WELCOME HOME!

SUZU!

TING

TING TING TING

TING TING TING

SHAAAAAAA

THOK

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I CAN'T LEAVE THE VILLAGE?! WHY??

RED HORSE AND HIS MEN ARE NEARBY. IT'S TOO DANGEROUS.

THAT ARROW WAS JUST A WARNING. THEY'LL START THEIR ATTACK SOON.

HEH-- THIS IS STARTING TO GET EXCITING!

GET YOUR WEAPONS, MEN!

SUZUKO! I'M SCARED!

SHU-HEI...

I WAS WONDER-ING... HOW OLD ARE YOU?

WHY? WHAT'S IT MATTER?

JUST TELL ME.

WH-WHAT? DO YOUR PEOPLE GET MARRIED SO YOUNG?

I'M IN HIGH SCHOOL... SEVEN-TEEN.

SEVEN-TEEN! YOU'RE TOO OLD TO BE SINGLE!

WHAT A SHAME. I'M SIXTEEN.

WELL... MAYBE IT DOESN'T MATTER.

I GUESS HAVING A WIFE ONE YEAR OLDER ISN'T TOO BAD.

WHA-- ??

OKAY! I'VE DECIDED THEN! WE'LL HAVE THE WEDDING AFTER I SETTLE THINGS WITH RED HORSE!

WAP

W-WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT-- ??

I DECIDED! I DECIDED!

WAS THAT...

...A PROPOSAL?!

IF I CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN...

...THEN SHUKUMARU IS THE ONLY PERSON I CAN DEPEND ON.

BUT WHY DID HE SUDDENLY TALK ABOUT... A WEDDING ??

THE VILLAGE IS IN SUCH A CRISIS RIGHT NOW... WHY DID HE SAY IT AT A TIME LIKE THIS?

IS IT BECAUSE THIS IS SUCH A CRITICAL MOMENT?

DOES IT MEAN HE'S READY TO DIE?

TING TING

SUZU..

HUH ??

THAT'S A NICE BELL YOU HAVE.

DO YOU WANT IT?

TING

NO... I HAD A BELL EXACTLY LIKE IT.

IT WAS A LITTLE DIRTIER ...

TINK TINK

AND IT DIDN'T SOUND AS CLEAR AS THIS ONE.

YOU'D HAVE FOUND OUT SOONER OR LATER, SO I GUESS WE MIGHT AS WELL TELL YOU.

WE'RE NOT YOUR REAL PARENTS.

AH HEH HEH-- I ALREADY GUESSED IT.

BECAUSE... BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE EVEN ONE SINGLE PHOTO OF ME AS A BABY...

SUZU-KO...

WHEN THEY FOUND YOU, THIS BELL WAS ATTACHED TO YOUR CLOTHING...

IT CAN'T BE!

NNN

ZZZZ

NO... IT'S IMPOS-SIBLE!

BECAUSE... IF WHAT I'M THINKING IS TRUE...

...SHUKU-MARU WOULD BE MY BROTHER!

YEAAHH!! RMMBR RRRR

WHAT'S GOING ON--?!

RRMMBRRRR

KRAKK

KRAKK

FWOOSH

VYUUU

VYUUU

AAH!

FIRE!!

VYUUU

VYUUU

THOK

THOK

THOK

YEEEEE

EEEEEE

THWACK

AHHHH

SUZU!!

SUZU! HOLD ON!!

HIYAH!

OHUKUMARU!!!

SUZUKO!

SUZU!

SUZU'S IN-SIDE!!

WHAT?!

WOOOOOOM

SUZU!

SUZU! ARE YOU IN THERE?!?

SHUKU-MARU!!

TING TING TING

KRAK FWOOM KRAK

ZZAATT

TING TING TING

.....

HUH?

HEH HEH HEH! HIDING WITH THE LITTLE GIRLIES, EH? WELL, IT'S *OVER*, FOOL!

SHUKU-MARU! COME OUT AND *FIGHT*, COWARD!

RED HORSE !!!

WHO'S HIDING?! I'VE COME TO *KILL* YOU, SCUM!!

NOW DIE!!

FWOOSH

KAUNAN

WAP

WHUDD

GRRRR--

EAT THIS!

CHUD

HA HA HA! IS THAT SUPPOSED TO HURT?!

CHUD CHUD

NO, YOU STINKING BASTARD--

CHAK

THIS IS!!

FWOOOM

SHUKK

GUKK!

HIIIYAAH!

WHOK

KUKK

DUKK

KLUK

NO! STOP!

FWOOF

FIRE--

A BURNING FLAME--

ZZAAAYTT

I'M ALWAYS SCARED WHENEVER I SEE FIRE--

HONK HONK

NOW I KNOW--IT WAS MY OWN POWER...

FWOOOOOOOO

SUURRR

ARE YOU AWAKE NOW--?

WH-WHERE ARE WE--??

IT'S MY HOME.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW HARD IT WAS SNEAKING YOU UP HERE. YOU'RE HEAVY.

WHAT HAP-PENED TO RED HORSE?

I DON'T KNOW... HE'S PROBABLY DEAD.

NO, SHUHEI! YOU JUST GOT OUT OF THE HOSPITAL!

AW, MOM! DON'T WORRY! I'M JUST GOING TO SEE MY FRIENDS! 'BYE!

WHAT ABOUT SUZU?

I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO HER...

SHU-HEI!!

HE'S JUST COME BACK FROM THE HOSPITAL-- ?? THAT MEANS TODAY IS...

NO, SHUHEI! DON'T GO TO THE PLAY-GROUND!

MOM'S STILL CALL-ING!

LET'S RUN!

I COULD COME BACK--

I HAVE TO SAVE SHUHEI... AND IT HAS TO BE TODAY!

IT'S THREE O'CLOCK NOW--

EVEN IF I TREAT SHUKU-MARU'S INJURIES, I'LL STILL HAVE TIME TO HELP SHUHEI.

I'M SURE THE EXPLOSION HAPPENS JUST BEFORE FIVE...

NO, PLEASE. I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR WOUNDS.

COME ON!

DON'T YOU KNOW I'M REALLY SUZU-- ??

I'M YOUR SISTER...

YOU HAVE SO MANY SCARS... OLD AND NEW...

OUCH !!

DON'T CHANGE THE SUB-JECT!

WHAT'S THIS-- ??

THIS SCAR IS SO MUCH NEATER THAN THE OTHERS.

YEAH, IT'S A SCAR FROM THE APPLE-CITIS.

AP--

APPLE-CITIS!!

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

SHUKU-MARU... ARE... ARE YOU...

SHUHEI-- ??

HUH?

HEAD-MAN, WHAT'S THAT?

IT'S THE CLOTHES SHUKUMARU WAS WEARING WHEN I FOUND HIM... SO MANY YEARS AGO.

WHEN WE FELL...

HE MUST'VE BEEN THROWN MORE THAN TEN YEARS EARLIER!

ALL BY HIM-SELF...

OUCH!

I... I HAVE TO RETURN TO MY VILLAGE...

SUZUKO-- LET'S GO BACK TOGETHER!

WHAT-- ??

YOU WANT TO RETURN, NO MATTER WHAT--?

WHY?

THEY CAN'T MAKE IT WITHOUT ME.

BESIDES, I OWE MY FATHER A LOT...

HE FOUND ME AS A CHILD AND RAISED ME AS HIS OWN.

WE CAN GO BACK THERE TODAY...

BUT...

SHUKUMARU, HASN'T YOUR LIFE BEEN HARD ON YOU?

HARD? NOT AT ALL. I HAVE LOTS OF GOOD FRIENDS!

ARE YOU GOING TO PROTECT ME FOREVER--?

OF COURSE! FOREVER AND EVER.

BUT MORE IMPOR-TANT THAN THAT...

...I HAVE YOU NOW!

SHUKU-MARU...

CAN WE REALLY GO HOME BY STANDING HERE LIKE THIS?

IT'LL HAPPEN SOON. VERY SOON.

SHUKUMARU, HOLD ME TIGHT. NO MATTER WHAT, DON'T LET GO.

THIS TIME, TOGETHER FOR SURE...

TING

YOUR MOM MUST BE WORRIED ABOUT YOU RIGHT NOW.

AW-- DON'T SWEAT IT!

SUZUKO!

MOO

TEN DAYS HAVE PASSED, AND STILL NO SIGN...

SHUKUMARU AND SUZU... WHERE COULD THEY BE?

KTOON KTOON

HUH!

HEY!

HYUUUUUUUU

HEAD-MAN... LOOK!

THEY'RE ALIVE! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

SHUKUMARU! WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?!

NEVER MIND! WE'VE GOT A WEDDING TO ATTEND TO!!

The END

MARIS THE CHOJO

LONG BEACH.

THE PLANET OHISO.

HOI HOI

WAYA WAYA

KYOP KYOP

KEE KEE

KEE ?

GRUMBLE

GRUMBLE

GRUMBLE

GYAHEEE!

HO HO HO

MY NAME'S MARIS. AND THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE MY VACATION.

FWIP FWIP

JEEZ, IT'S HOT!

GRUMBLE

HUMAN TAXI

QUIT GRUMBLING! PEOPLE WILL THINK I'M AN IDIOT FOR HANGING AROUND YOU.

GRUM BLE

GRUM BLE

HUMAN TAXI

AND THIS IS MY PARTNER. MURPHY.

Y'SEE, I BROKE A LITTLE SOMETHING ON MY REGULAR JOB, AND I HAVE TO MAKE SOME MONEY TO PAY FOR IT.

PANT

PANT

YOU CALL THREE ROCKETS "A LITTLE SOMETHING" ?

EXPENSIVE ?!

A REGULAR TAXI WOULD COST TWICE THIS MUCH!!

WISEST NOT TO MAKE HER ANGRY, TOURIST SIR.

THEY ARE MUCH VIOLENT ON HER PLANET THANATOS.

THAT'S FOR SURE!

MAKE ME MAD AND I MIGHT FORGET MYSELF!!

WHOOF!

SWAP

GOD THIS IS EMBAR-RASSING.

AUGHH! I'VE DONE ENOUGH WORK ANYWAY !

YOU SURE ABOUT THAT ?

C'MON! I'M YOUNG! I'VE GOT TO PLAY, OR I'LL WITHER AWAY!

HMMM...

WELL, THEN... HOW ABOUT A SWIM ?

YES! AT LAST! THE SPRING-TIME OF MY LIFE!

CHUG CHUG CHUG

RRRGH!

WELL. AN UNPLEASANT FACE AS USUAL, LIEUTENANT MARIS.

WHO ARE YOU TO TALK?

DID YOU ENJOY YOUR VACATION ?

VACATION ?! VACATION ?!! THE MINUTE I FINISH THAT HORRIBLE "TAXI" JOB -- YOU CALL ME BACK!

AHH. NOW I UNDERSTAND THE UNPLEASANT FACE!

WHO ARE YOU TO TALK?

WELL? DID YOU ENJOY YOUR VACATION ?

YARRG! FORGET IT, POPS!

MY REGULAR JOB'S WITH THE SPACE PATROL'S SPECIAL POLICE.

JUST TELL ME MY MISSION...

...BEFORE YOU REALLY GET ON MY NERVES!

I'M A CREATURE OF THE SHADOWS, CONTACTED ONLY FOR THE MOST DANGEROUS CASES.

APO

THE SON OF ONE OF THE LEADING POLITICIANS IN THE MILKY WAY FEDERATION HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED.

THE KIDNAPPERS ARE HOLED UP ON THE PLANET MOROI, A.K.A. "FRAJYL," AND DEMAND A HUGE RANSOM.

HERE ARE PICTURES OF THE VICTIM, SENT BY THE KIDNAPPERS.

CLICK

UH AT?!

CLICK

CLICK

THESE... WERE TAKEN AFTER HE WAS KIDNAPPED?

YES INDEED.

A GUTSY LAD, DON'T YOU THINK? GREAT COMPOSURE!

BUT THEN, HE'S NEVER HAD TO WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING. HIS PARENTS ARE INCREDIBLY WEALTHY.

CLICK

"INCREDIBLY WEALTHY"?!

HIS NAME IS KOGANEMARU MATSUSHITA.

MATSUSHITA! THE BIGGEST QUADRILLIONAIRES IN THE GALAXY!

OH, KOGANEMARU! BE BRAVE!

I SHALL RESCUE YOU WITHOUT FAIL!

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO, MARIS?

DIDN'T YOU HEAR, MURPHY? THE SON OF AN ULTRA-RICH FAMILY!

I OWE YOU MY LIFE! PLEASE MARRY ME!

OH, I DO!!

AND ONCE I'VE MARRIED HIM... THEY CAN PAY OFF ALL MY DEBTS!

GOODBYE TO VACATION-TIME JOBS!

YES! YES!

HMPH. SUCH AN IDEALIST.

THE DEBTS AREN'T MY FAULT ANYWAY. WHY DO THEY PUT ME IN ROCKETS MEANT FOR EARTHLINGS?

I'VE GOT SIX TIMES THE POWER OF ANY EARTHLING!

KLONG

JUST PAY FOR THOSE THREE SHIPS!

CLICK

AAAGH!

FORCED TO WORK WITHOUT PAY...TO TAKE MISERABLE JOBS ON MY DAYS OFF...

SQUEAK SQUEAK

...TO WEAR THIS DEPRESSING "POWER-SUPPRESSION CAST." THE SPRINGTIME OF MY LIFE...

...IS DARKER THAN WINTER!

:AHEM:

OH, COME ON! IT'S JUST A LITTLE CRACK!

BANG BANG

THIS IS THE END. IF I SUCCEED IN THIS MISSION, IT'S GOODBYE TO THIS TRAP!

WAIT FOR ME, MY PRINCE!

I'M SORRY, BUT WE'RE REALLY NOT COMPATIBLE.

HUH ?

DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS!

HEY!

DON'T PUSH!

I NEED A WELL-BRED WOMAN !

YOU WANT MY MONEY !

THANATOSIAN BARBARIAN!

YOU AREN'T MY TYPE !

WHY, YOU--

OO, I HATE YOUR SHAPE-CHANGING !

WHHHHH

SKOOM

BP

HEH HEH HEH

THE PLANET MOROI, A.K.A. "FRAJYL"

"ENEMY VESSEL APPROACHING!"

PING

HOW CAN THIS BE, SUZY? I'M SURE YOUR RANSOM NOTE SPECIFIED THAT THEY WERE NOT TO NOTIFY THE POLICE!

HUMPH. IT'S PROBABLY THOSE "SPECIAL POLICE" STICKING THEIR NOSES IN!

GRRR GRRR

SPECIAL POLICE, EH?

HEH... INTERESTING...

SHALL WE TEACH THEM A LESSON-- BY KILLING THE HOSTAGE?

DON'T BE STUPID!

IF WE WANT TO TEACH THEM A LESSON... WE SHOULD KILL THE POLICE!

WE'LL KEEP OUR HOSTAGE ALIVE, AND DEMAND RANSOM AFTER RANSOM.

IF WE AREN'T UTTERLY RUTHLESS ABOUT MAKING MONEY FROM THIS...

...WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO BUY A NEW HIDEOUT!

IT IS GETTING A LITTLE WORN...

THESE EARTH-MADE FORTRESSES ARE CHEAP-- BUT SO FRAGILE!

IF WE ONLY HAD MONEY I COULD FINALLY BE FREE...

...OF THIS POWER-SUPPRESSION CAST!

SQUEAK SQUEAK

DOWN WITH THE SPECIAL POLICE!

SKOOF

SQUEAK SQUEAK SQUEAK

IT'S ALL BECAUSE I'M POOR!

MARIS, DON'T YOU THINK IT'S STRANGE...?

HOORAY! WE'RE HERE! WE'RE HERE!

I SAY, DON'T YOU THINK IT'S STRANGE WE COULD SNEAK IN SO EASILY?

$$$ SNAK

I'M COMING TO SAVE YOU, MY PRINCE!

.....

I'LL GIVE YOU YOUR FREEDOM-- PLUS I'LL GIVE YOU ME!

YOU JUST GIVE ME MONEY.

HM? DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?

FORGET IT!

SIZZLE

SIZZLE

I WAS JUST REMINDING MYSELF NOT TO WASTE TIME TRYING TO HOLD AN INTELLIGENT DISCUSSION WITH YOU!

HMOOOO

CLICK

KHOOP

MARIS! IT'S ALWAYS BEEN YOU! ONLY YOU!

BA-BUMP BUMP

THIS IS NO TIME FOR JOKES!

WELCOME TO FRAIYL, YOUNG LADY OF THE SPECIAL POLICE!

HA HA HA HA

YOUR ESCORT AWAITS YOU OUTSIDE!

YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS!

UH-OH. ONE OF THE FRONT LEGS IS COMPLETELY SHOT.

MORE MONEY I OWE.

YOU'RE A THANA-TOSIAN, AREN'T YOU?

ME? GEE, NO! I'M JUST AN EARTHLING !

LIAR! NO EARTHLING COULD MOVE IN A STRENGTH-6 POWER-SUPPRESSION CAST!

CLICK

HUH ?

WHAT'S THIS ?

AN ELECTRON-LOCK...TO MAKE SURE YOUR CAST STAYS ON!

.....

SO, AN EXECUTION, EH...?

YOU'D FIND IT... INTERESTING.

SQUEAK

I'LL KILL HER SO CRUELLY, THE ENTIRE SPACE PATROL WILL SHUDDER.

CARE TO WATCH ?

WHIP

WHOO! AN EARTH-MADE PREFAB FORTRESS! DOESN'T *THAT* LOOK FRAGILE?

WOULD I WASTE MY TIME ON THE EXECUTION OF A MERE INSECT?

QUIET! MY FORTRESS IS FLAWLESS!

AS YOU PLEASE...

CHNK

KWEEE

GIVE IT YOUR BEST.

WHAT'S THIS PLACE FOR?

=HEH HEH HEH= WITH A CAST ON, A THANATOSIAN IS NEARLY AS WEAK AS AN EARTHLING.

MARIS...?

MY CAST IS ONLY STRENGTH-3.

I COULD NEVER BEAT YOU... IN A FAIR FIGHT.

SNAP

SWOOSH

FLAP

FZZZ

AK!

REMEMBER THAT, FOX. TRY ANYTHING... AND THAT HAPPENS TO YOU!

PREPARE FOR A SLOW DEATH.

SNAP

DON'T YOU HAVE EVEN ONE SHRED OF HONOR?

IT'S ALL BECAUSE I'M POOR!

NOW FIGHT!

DON'T TELL ME ABOUT BEING POOR!

NO ONE COULD BE POORER THAN ME!

SWISH.

Hn!

WHOOSH

HWEEE

KICK

WASHH

HEY!?

CRACKLE CRACKLE

CRACK

HUH?

WHOOSH

AAAA!!

BA-BUMP

WHA--?!

TALK ABOUT FRAGILE?

TIP TAP

SNIK.

CAN YOU FIND THE REAL ONE ?

I THINK SO!

OG!!

CLICK.

MARIS !

WHIP

UHH!

BOP

THE RELEASE FOR THE ELECTRON-LOCK!

Ungh...

UH-OH.

SKITTER SKITTER

HA! SHE'LL BE IN BUDDHA-LAND BEFORE YOU FIND IT!

KRRRRR

CAN'T... REACH IT...

CAN'T... LAST...

KRRR

GOT IT!

HUH--?

PLOK

SPROING!!

YES! I'M FREE!

WHAP

WHOOMANG

BOMP

TM TM TM

KRAK

HEH HEH

WH--WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WHAT'S IT LOOK LIKE?!

HOME

KRUNCH

SHMANG

NO !!

HOLD IT!

SHADDAP !

BOING

STOP! DON'T BREAK IT!

KRUNCH

WHO-- ?!

THE RINGLEADER OF THE KIDNAPPERS !

HAND OVER THE MONEY-- I MEAN, HOSTAGE !

NOT SO FAST!

Tsk Tsk

WE'RE GOING TO DIE ALONG WITH THIS FORTRESS...

...TAKING YOU AND THE HOSTAGE WITH US!

HEH

NO...NO, PLEASE. I... I GIVE UP...

WHUFFOR ?

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO NOW THAT MY HIDEOUT'S ALL SMASHED?

TOOM

THE SAME !

YOU MEAN... YOU'RE REALLY GIVING UP?

BOY...

HOW BORING !

GYAA!

KOGANEMARU MATSUSHITA !

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

YOU TWO ARE IN CAHOOTS ?!

NO. I REALLY DID KIDNAP HIM, BUT... WELL...

I GOT SO BORED, I DECIDED I WANTED TO PLAY THE ROLE OF THE VILLAIN!

OO! HOW BRAVE! HOW DARING! HOW LIKE A QUADRILLIONAIRE!

OH, MY FORTRESS, MY FORTRESS...AND I EVEN WORE A CAST TO KEEP FROM DESTROY-ING IT...

BOO HOO

PLEASE, DON'T CRY.

YOU CAN BUILD A BETTER ONE!

I'LL GIVE YOU THE MONEY FOR IT!

WHAT ?

SUZY... WILL YOU MARRY ME ?

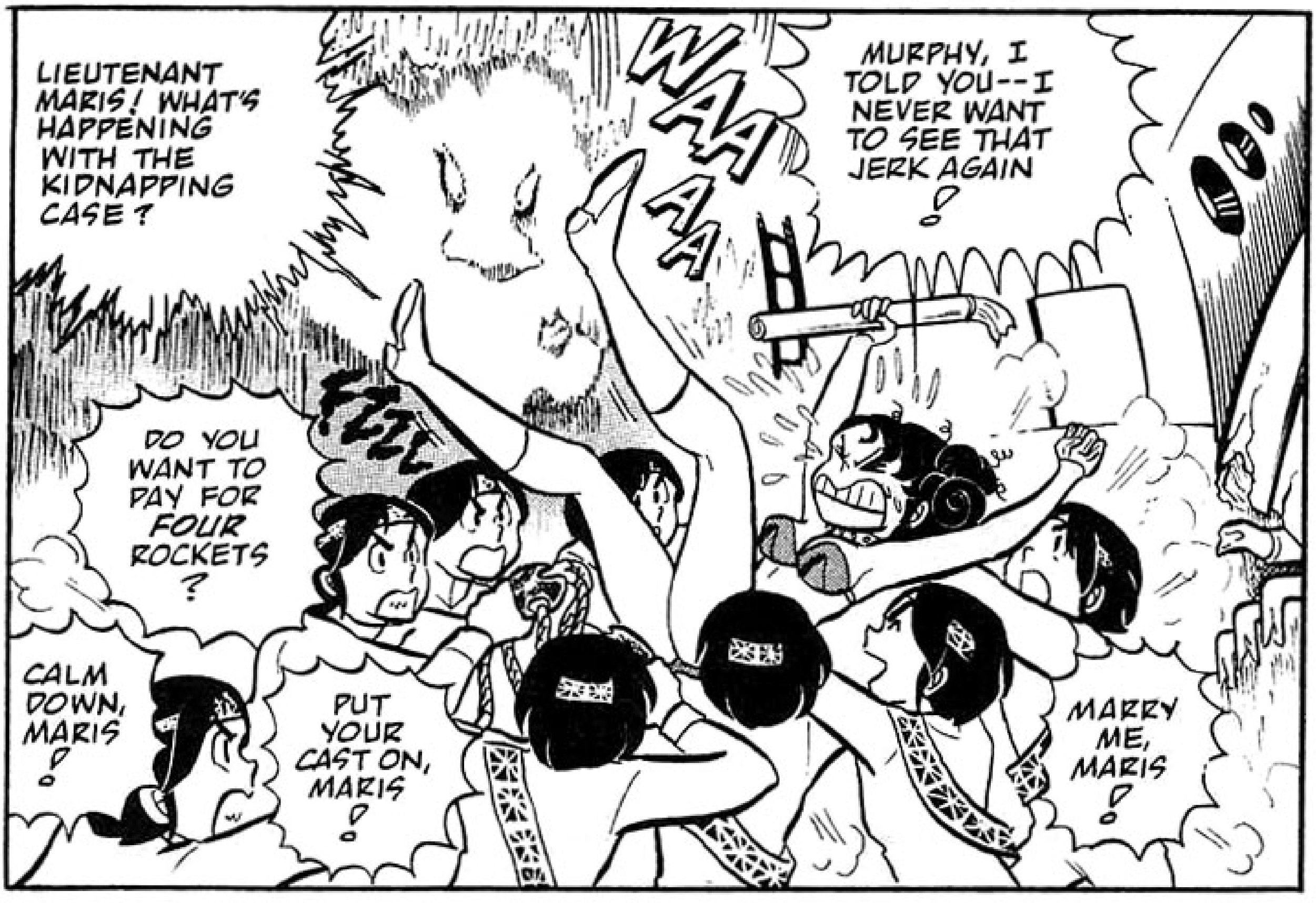
FIZZLE

OH, I DO!!

THEN YOU DON'T HATE ME?

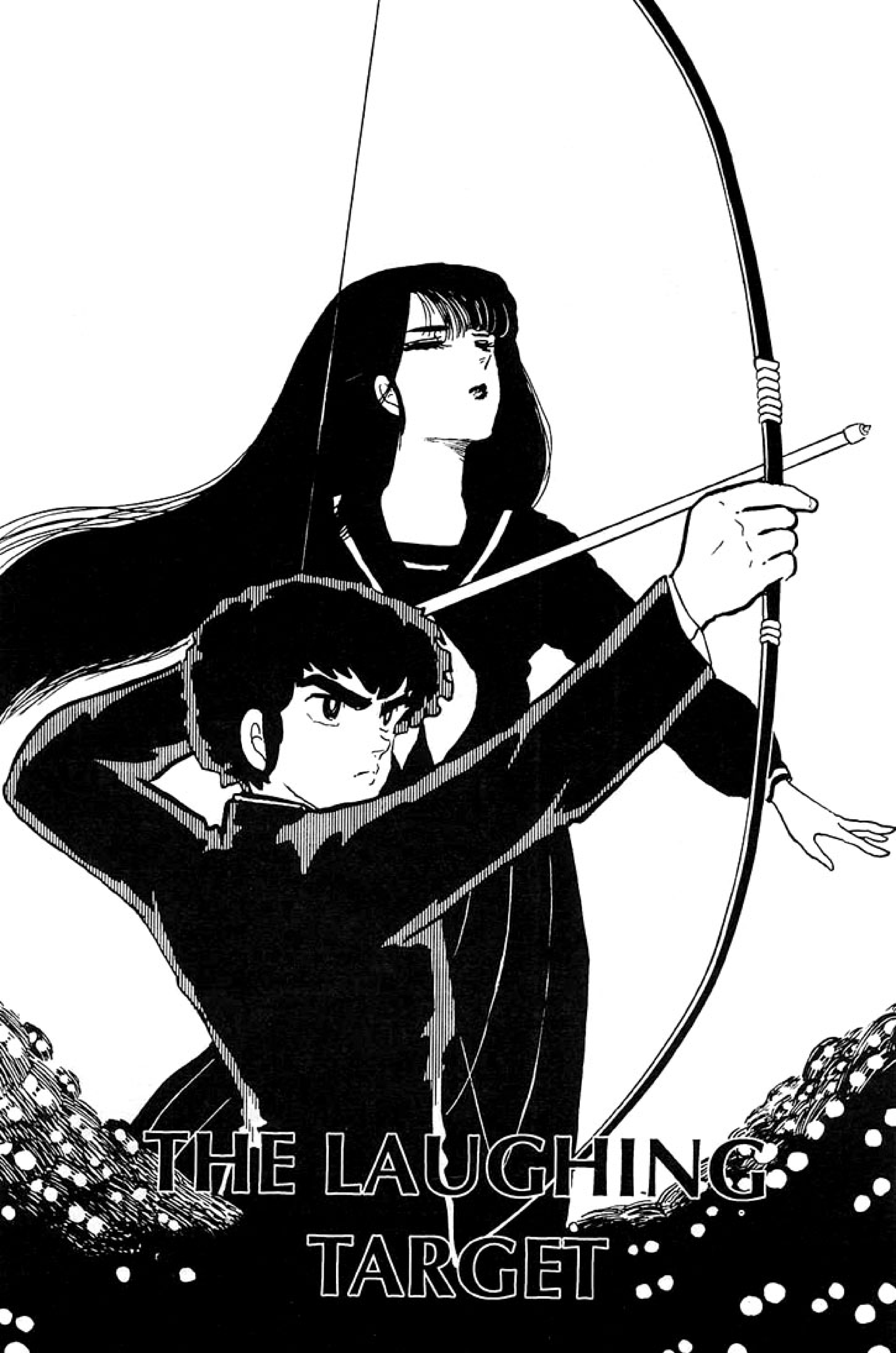
WHY WOULD I? IT WAS FUN!

WHAM
BAM
WAAAAA


LIEUTENANT MARIS! WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE KIDNAPPING CASE?
DO YOU WANT TO PAY FOR FOUR ROCKETS?
WAAAA
MURPHY, I TOLD YOU--I NEVER WANT TO SEE THAT JERK AGAIN!
CALM DOWN, MARIS!
PUT YOUR CAST ON, MARIS!
MARRY ME, MARIS!

IT'S ALL BECAUSE I'M POOR!

The End!


THE LAUGHING
TARGET

SISTER, HE'S ONLY SIX YEARS OLD!

THAT'S FAR TOO EARLY TO MAKE ANY PROMISES!

AND I'M TELLING YOU--THE EARLIER, THE BETTER!

AZUSA IS THE ONLY DAUGHTER BORN TO THE SHIGA'S FIRST FAMILY!

SHE HAS TO TAKE A HUSBAND EVENTUALLY IF SHE WISHES TO ACCEDE AS THE FAMILY'S HEAD!

PERHAPS... BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT HER HUSBAND HAS TO BE YUZURU!

UNDERSTOOD! BUT BECAUSE YUZURU IS YOUR SON, I HAVE FAITH IN HIM!

IS IT TRUE? AM I REALLY FATED TO BE YUZURU'S BRIDE?

SO IT'S SETTLED THEN? YUZURU WILL BE AZUSA'S BETROTHED?

THINK CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU ANSWER!

AS HEAD OF THE SHIGA FAMILY, I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO STAND AGAINST ME!

WELL, AZUSA, THE DEAL IS *DONE!* WHEN YOU *GROW UP,* YOU ARE GOING TO BE YUZURU'S *BRIDE!*

YES, MOTHER...

...AS YOU *WISH.*

WHAT'S *WRONG,* YUZURU-- ??

DON'T YOU *WANT* ME TO BE YOUR BRIDE SOMEDAY?

OF *COURSE* I DO! YOU *KNOW* HOW MUCH I *LIKE* YOU.

DO YOU *REALLY,* YUZURU ??

DO YOU REALLY *LIKE* ME--?

Y-YES... A *LOT!*

THEN LET'S *PLEDGE* OURSELVES BY *HOOKING* OUR LITTLE *FINGERS* TOGETHER!

WE'LL *NEVER* BREAK OUR *WORD!* WE'RE PROMISED *FOREVER,* OKAY?

OKAY!

TWONG! TWONG!

=SOB=

=SOB=

=SOB=

GOOD-BYE, MOTHER-- I WILL MISS YOU.

WHAT A PITY!

THE GIRL HAD NO FAMILY EXCEPT FOR HER MOTHER!

AND WHAT A STRANGE WAY FOR HER MOTHER TO DIE!

I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH FOR YOUR *HELP* DURING THIS TRYING TIME!

OUR *PLEASURE*, MISS--BUT WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO *DO NOW?*

I AM GOING TO TAKE AZUSA WITH ME TO *TOKYO.*

AND THEN WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THIS *FAMILY?*

SOONER OR LATER, I AM AFRAID WE WILL HAVE TO *SELL* THIS MANSION.

UNCLE-- *NO!*

I WILL SIMPLY *MARRY* YUZURU, AND THEN...

...AND THEN I WILL ACCEDE TO THE SHIGA'S *HEAD FAMILY.*

THAT IS, AFTER ALL, WHAT MY MOTHER *WISHED* FOR.

A-AZUSA--??

AND *YUZURU*, TOO. YEARS AGO, HE MADE ME A *PROMISE.* ...

TOKYO, SEVERAL DAYS LATER...

THRINNNG

TZZNAK

TOK

ALL RIGHT!! HE DID IT! A PERFECT BULL'S-EYE!!

HAH!

YAYYY! YIPPEE!

NICE SHOT, YUZURU!

GIRLS, JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING? I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING SO RUDE!

I APPRECIATE THE PRAISE, LADIES-- BUT I REALLY DON'T NEED IT!

NOT WHEN YOU'RE AS GOOD AS I AM!

HEY, YUZU-RU!!

AND JUST WHAT KIND OF ATTITUDE WAS THAT?

EVERY TIME YOU ACT LIKE THAT, THE FRESHMAN GIRLS LOSE CONTROL COM-PLETELY!

OH, SATOMI-- YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS!

WHO? ME--?!?

SO WHAT DO YOU WANT TO *DO* TODAY?

HEAD ON OVER TO THE *COFFEE SHOP*, MAYBE?

AFRAID *NOT!* THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO *DO* TODAY!

MY *FIANCÉE* IS ARRIVING TODAY FROM OUR *HOME TOWN*, AND I--

KA

OW! WHY DID YOU *HIT* ME??

YOU HAVE A *FIANCÉE*-- AND YOU NEVER BOTHERED TO *MENTION* IT? NOT A SOLITARY *WORD?*

I THOUGHT YOU WERE *MY BOYFRIEND!* IF YOU'VE BEEN *TWO-TIMING* ME--!

RELAX, WILL YOU? THIS ALL HAPPENED *YEARS* AGO, WHEN I WAS JUST A *KID!*

BESIDES, SHE'S MY *COUSIN!*

YOUR *COUSIN?!*

YOUR COUSIN IS YOUR *FIANCÉE*-- *?!?*

BOY, TALK ABOUT *WEIRD* RELA-TION-SHIPS!!

MY AUNT WAS A VERY *STERN* WOMAN...

SHE *MUST* HAVE BEEN--!

SHE JUST SORT OF *MADE* THE DECISION *FOR* US WHEN WE WERE *CHILDREN*...

BUT SHE *DIED* RECENTLY-- IN A VERY *MYSTERIOUS* MANNER!

HMM... I *SEE*...

THEN *THAT* MEANS YOU'RE EVENTUALLY GOING TO MARRY INTO YOUR *HEAD* FAMILY!

SO WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE *US*?

I SUPPOSE WE MIGHT AS WELL PUT AN *END* TO OUR RELATION-SHIP!

YOU CAN BE THE MOST *IRRITATING* WOMAN SOMETIMES!

WHAT DOES WHAT HAPPENED *TEN YEARS* AGO HAVE TO DO WITH *TODAY*?

FOR ALL WE KNOW, AZUSA MIGHT HAVE A PACK OF *BOY-FRIENDS* BY NOW!

MAYBE... BUT I *DOUBT* IT!

IF *I* WERE HER, I'D STILL BE THINKING ONLY ABOUT *YOU*-- WITH ALL MY *HEART*!

THAT'S *FLATTER-ING*-- BUT I WOULDN'T *BET* ON IT!

HEY, EVERY-BODY... I'M HOME!

SO WHERE'S AZU-SA?

SHE HAS BEEN WAIT-ING FOR YOU.

HOLY--!!

YUZURU... ??

AZUSA? IS THIS REALLY YOU--?!?

OH... YUZU-RU!!

OH, GOOD GRIEF!

I COULDN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU--!

I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH!

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS--! SHE'S BECOME SO... SO BEAUTIFUL!

IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS SINCE I LAST SAW YOU, AZUSA-- IT'S AMAZING HOW MUCH YOU'VE GROWN!

YOU TOO!

GEE, I'LL BET YOU'RE REALLY POPULAR WITH THE BOYS!

WELL, I... I...

TO TELL THE TRUTH, YUZURU--

--I'VE NEVER EVEN SPOKEN TO ANY BOYS MY AGE!

WHAT--?!?

YOU'RE KID-DING, RIGHT?

NOT AT ALL!

WHY SHOULD I TALK TO ANOTHER BOY-- WHEN I HAVE YOU?

WOW!

WHO'S SHE?

GEE, SATOMI-- LOOK AT THAT!

EH?

HEY, YUZU-RU--!

UH-OH.

I'LL GIVE YOU CREDIT FOR NERVE!

SHE'S A REAL *CUTIE*, THIS ONE!

SO WHAT'S YOUR *NAME*, CUTIE?

WHERE ARE YOU *FROM*?

WHY ARE YOU WASTING YOUR TIME WITH A STIFF LIKE YUZU-RU?

HEY, *LOOK*-- SHE'S TREM-BLING!

GEEZ, I DIDN'T MEAN TO *SCARE* HER!

HEY, SHE *IS* SHAKING! WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH HER?

=SIGH=

OUCH.

HMPH!!

KLAK KLAK KLAK

KLLLANNNGGG

HEY!

SA-TOM!!

C'MON-- WAITA-MINNIT, WILL YA?

...

WHY ARE YOU WASTING TIME CHASING *ME*, YUZURU? YOU DON'T WANT YOUR DARLING *FIANCÉE* TO THINK YOU'RE *IGNORING* HER, DO YOU?

OH, GIVE ME A *BREAK*, SATOMI! I TOLD YOU NOT TO *WORRY* ABOUT HER!

WORRIED? WHO'S *WORRIED?*

YOU SAID SHE'S YOUR *COUSIN*, DIDN'T YOU?

SO I HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY *ABOUT*, DO I? SO WHY DO YOU TWO KEEP *FLIRT-ING?*

YOU'RE MAKING A *MOUN-TAIN* OUT OF A *MOLE-HILL*, YOU KNOW!

THEN I WOULD *APPRECIATE* IT IF YOU WOULD KINDLY STOP *FOLLOW-ING* ME, YOU... YOU *MOLE!*

I JUST THOUGHT WE COULD WALK TO ARCHERY PRACTICE TOGETHER...

YOU SHOULDN'T THINK OF AZUSA AS A *RIVAL*, SATOMI! SHE'S ONLY FIXATED ON *ME* BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANYONE *ELSE!*

SOON NOW, SHE'LL START NOTICING *OTHER* BOYS--

AND WHEN SHE *DOES*, I'LL BET SHE WON'T EVEN REMEMBER *MY NAME!*

YOU CAN THINK WHAT YOU *WANT* TO, YUZU-RU--

BUT IF *I* WERE HER, I'D *NEVER* LET YOU GO!

SHE REALLY IS *BEAUTIFUL*, ISN'T SHE?

C'MON--LET'S GET *OUTTA* HERE!

YES, I GUESS SHE *IS!* WHEN I FIRST *SAW* HER YESTERDAY, I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW *GREAT* SHE--

OWP! WHAT I ACTUALLY *MEANT* TO SAY WAS, AZUSA MAY BE *BEAUTIFUL* BUT YOU'RE REALLY *CUTE!*

UHH... I'M JUST GETTING DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO *TROUBLE*, AREN'T I--??

OH, SO I'M *CUTE* NOW, AM I? LIKE SOME BABY *KITTEN?* AND JUST *HOW* EXACTLY DID YOU COME TO *THAT* BRILLIANT CONCLUSION?

LOOK, SATOMI-- THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT AZUSA IS NOTHING TO ME!

SHE'S MY *COUSIN*-- THAT'S *ALL!* AM I FOR-GIVEN?

WELL, *OKAY*... FOR *NOW!*

HMM... LOOKS LIKE NO-BODY'S *AROUND*-- EXCEPT FOR *US!*

OH?

WE'D BETTER GO *CHANGE!* I'LL SEE YOU AT THE *GATE!*

GIRLS' DRESSING ROOM

OH, *NO*... EVERY-ONE ELSE IS *GONE!* I *HATE* BEING *ALONE* IN HERE!

THE *SOONER* I CAN GET *CHANGED*, THE *BETTER!*

KLIK

WHAT--?!

A-AZUSA? WH-WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* HERE?

I WANT YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM *YUZURU!*

YUZURU IS *MY* FIANCÉE-- *MY* BE-TROTHED!

DON'T TRY TO COME *BE-TWEEN* US!

Y-YOU CAN'T BE *SERIOUS!*

YOU AND YUZURU WERE *EN-GAGED* WHEN YOU WERE JUST *CHIL-DREN!*

YOU CAN'T REALLY INTEND TO *HOLD* HIM TO HIS PROMISE *NOW--?!*

THAT IS NONE OF YOUR *BUSINESS!* YUZURU IS *MINE!*

WHOOO

KLATCH

SLAM

I WONDER WHAT'S KEEP-ING HER SO LONG?

Y-YUZURU--??

SO THERE YOU ARE, SA-TOMI!

GASP GASP GASP

WHAT IS IT, SA-TOMI? WHAT'S WRONG??

IT--IT'S AZUSA! SHE--SHE WAS--

AZUSA??

WHOO WEEOO

YUZURU, LOOK... OVER THERE!

WHAT ?!?

WHOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

IT WAS ONLY THE *WIND!* WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH YOU, SATOMI?

BUT I... SHE...

FORGET IT, YU-ZURU... IT WAS NOTHING.

...MENTION NONE OF IT TO YUZURU...

KLAK KLAK

...MENTION NONE OF IT...

KLAK

THOK

THOK

THOK

THOK

EHUH EHUH EHUH EHUH

AZUSA-- WAIT! DON'T RUN!!

WHY SHOULD YOU *MIND* BECOMING *NAKED?* DON'T YOU DO IT IN FRONT OF YOUR *FIANCÉE?*

THRAK

SHE'S DISAP-PEARED!

WELL, SPREAD OUT AND KEEP LOOKING! SHE COULDN'T HAVE GONE FAR!

KRUNCH

THRASH

KLUD KLUD KLUD

EHUH EHUH EHUH

OH, YUZURU ...

... PLEASE HELP ME!

SKRA

SKRA

SKRA

HYAA

NO !!!

OUCH! HEY, DON'T BITE!

YOU LOUSY LITTLE--! THAT *HURT!*

SWAK

WHAK WHAK

THWO

THROKK

UNNHH!

EHUH--!!!

THROK

THROK

WOOOOOOOOOO

THUD

SO I HEAR THAT *THIS* ONE IS YUZURU'S *FIANCÉE!*

ISN'T THAT *SWEET?*

DOING IT TO SOME-ONE *ELSE'S* GIRL ONLY MAKES ME THAT MUCH MORE--

UKKKK

SNAKKKT

GOD-- NO!!

AGHHHH

DDCHH

ARRGHH!!

HEH.

IT-- IT WASN'T MY FAULT--!

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

WHAT WILL I DO?

I WISH... I WISH...

I WISH HE'D JUST DIS-APPEAR!

WHOOWEEEO

CHEE CHEE CHEE CHEE

CHEE CHEE CHEE CHEE

CHEE CHEE CHEE

SKITTER SKITTER

SKITTER SKITTER

HUH?

WH-WHAT *ARE* THESE THINGS?

WH-WHAT ARE THEY *DOING* TO HIM?

KRUNCH KRUNCH KRUNCH

DEAR *GOD*-- THEY'RE *EAT-ING!!*

KRUNCH KRUNCH KRUNCH

WHOOOOWEEEO

KRUNCH KRUNCH KRUNCH KRUNCH KRUNCH

I BELONG TO YUZURU *ALONE!*

GOD HELP ANYONE *ELSE* WHO DARES TO *TOUCH* ME!

SO YOUR SON HASN'T COME *HOME* YET-- ??

NO. AND WHEN I ASKED HIS *FRIENDS*--

--THEY SAID THE LAST TIME THEY HAD *SEEN* HIM WAS WITH YOUR *DAUGHTER!*

WHAK

SOB SOB

AZUSA, DO YOU *KNOW* ANYTHING ABOUT THIS?

NO, MOTHER... NOT A *THING.*

THEY *SAY* EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE IS OUT *SEARCHING* FOR HIM.

ALL THIS *FUSS* OVER SUCH AN *UN-WORTHY* CHILD...

HE *STEALS* THINGS FROM THE *FARMS*, YOU KNOW-- AND DOES TERRIBLE, *NAUGHTY* THINGS TO LITTLE *GIRLS!*

SUCH AN *UNPLEA-SANT* LITTLE BOY.

FRANKLY, I FOR ONE WOULD FEEL MUCH *BETTER* IF HE WERE NEVER *FOUND!*

CHEE CHEE CHEE CHEE

CHEE CHEE CHEE

TASTE GOOD-- ??

KRUNCH KRUNCH KRUNCH

THIS STUPID DOG BIT ME--

--SO I FED HIM RAT POISON AND WATCHED HIM DIE!

KRUNCH KRUNCH KRUNCH

SERVES THE NASTY LITTLE CREA-TURE RIGHT!

AZUSA !?!

KRUNCH KRUNCH

GET AWAY FROM HERE !!

GO AWAY !!!

CHEE CHEE CHEE

IT'S ALL RIGHT, MOTHER-- DON'T BE FRIGHT-ENED! THEY'RE MY FRIENDS!

GO AHEAD, LITTLE ONES-- FINISH YOUR MEAL!

CHEE

OH, AZUSA-- !!

MY POOR DEAR AZUSA ---

WOULD YOU LIKE A *SECOND HELPING*, YUZURU?

NO, THANK YOU, MOTHER.

I WONDER WHAT REALLY *HAPPENED* TO SATOMI--? SHE REFUSED TO EVEN *TALK* ABOUT IT!

SKUFF

THIKT-TIK-TIK-TIK

HELLO... ?? THIS IS YUZURU ...

MAY I SPEAK TO *SATOMI*, PLEASE?

KLIKT

AZUSA, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE *DOING?*

THAT WAS REALLY *RUDE!*

I'M *SORRY*, YUZURU.

WHY DON'T YOU *LIKE ME?*

IS THERE SOMETHING *WRONG* WITH ME?

I WAS ONLY THINKING ABOUT *YOU*, YUZURU--!

C'MON, AZUSA-- IT'S *OKAY!* YOU DON'T HAVE TO *CRY* ABOUT IT!

I'M... I'M SO *ASHAMED* ....

AZUSA, COME *HERE*, PLEASE!

YES, MOTHER.

THIS IS *IMPOR-TANT*, CHILD-- SO *LISTEN* TO ME!

YOU KNOW THOSE WEIRD *CREA-TURES* OF YOURS?

WELL, YOU MUST NEVER SHOW THEM TO *YUZURU!* DO YOU *UNDER-STAND?*

HE WON'T *LIKE* YOU ANY MORE IF HE SEES THEM-- AND YOU DON'T WANT *THAT* TO HAPPEN, DO YOU?

OH, *NO*, MOTHER! NOT *THAT--* *!!*

YUZURU? DO YOU LIKE ME?

SURE I DO!

AZUSA, THIS IS GETTING SERIOUS!

IT'S TIME WE HAD A TALK!

TELL ME, AZUSA-- WHY ARE YOU SO PERSISTENT ABOUT ME?

YUZURU, HOW CAN YOU ASK THAT? YOU ONCE TOLD ME HOW MUCH YOU LIKED ME!

DEAR GOD, AZUSA! THAT WAS HOW LONG AGO?? WE WERE ONLY CHILDREN THEN!

SO?

IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE PROMISES MADE BY CHILDREN? ARE THEY ANY LESS SACRED?

HUH?

WHY... ??

SATOMI, ARE YOU OKAY?

YOU LOOK REALLY DE-PRESSED!

THIS IS ALL HER FAULT!

SHE'S STILL TRYING TO TAKE YUZURU AWAY FROM ME!

SHH

GOOD GOD! THAT WINDOW JUST SHATTERED -- ALL BY ITSELF!!

BUT WHY? HOW...?!?

SATOMI, ARE YOU OKAY?

SA-TOMI!? OH, POOR SA-TOM!!

.....

.....

DO YOU THINK YOU SHOULD GO HOME EARLY, SATOMI?

NURSE

N-NO...

PLEASE... NO! I-- I DON'T WANT TO BE ALONE RIGHT NOW...

"WHAT ARE YOU SO AFRAID OF, SATOMI?"

"COULD IT REALLY BE... AZUSA?"

IT'S ALL RIGHT, SAT--!!

I'LL TAKE YOU HOME LATER.

"I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT..."

"...NOT AZUSA!"

"IT'S RIDICULOUS!"

"HOW COULD AZUSA HAVE EVEN BROKEN THE GLASS?"

"SHE WAS NOWHERE NEAR IT!"

"IT'S IMPOS-SIBLE!"

THOK

...MENTION NONE OF IT TO YUZU-RU...

...MENTION NONE OF IT...

IT'S NO USE! I JUST CAN'T TELL YUZU-RU!

BOYS' LOCKER ROOM

BESIDES, HE'D NEVER BELIEVE ME--!

EH--?!?

SATOMI ??

SA-TOMI !!!

NO--

KLAK KLAK KLAK

THOK THOK

PLEASE-- STOP IT!!

SA-TOMI !!!

SLAM

THOK THOK

GET DOWN!!

AZUSA ?!?

THOK

UHUH UHUH

SA-TOMI, SPEAK TO ME!

WHO DID THIS TO YOU?

IT WAS AZUSA, WASN'T IT? WASN'T IT-- ?!?

I-- I DON'T KNOW! I CAN'T BE SURE!

PLEASE, YUZURU... I JUST WANT TO GO HOME...

IT'S OKAY, SATOMI-- IT'S GONNA BE OKAY! I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU!

THIS IS ALL VERY *STRANGE*, SATOMI-- AT LEAST, ACCORD-ING TO MY *FATHER!*

HE TOLD ME MY *AUNT* ALWAYS SEEMED TO KEEP THE *REST* OF US RELATIVES AT A *DISTANCE!*

NOW I'M BEGINNING TO SUSPECT IT WAS BECAUSE SOMETHING WAS TERRIBLY *WRONG* WITH *AZUSA!*

NO, YUZU-RU-- *DON'T* !!

PLEASE DON'T EVEN *TALK* ABOUT HER, YUZURU!

THANKS FOR BRINGING SATOMI *HOME*, YUZURU. YOU ALWAYS TAKE SUCH *GOOD CARE* OF HER.

I TRY TO... WELL, GUESS I'LL BE *GOING* THEN.

YUZURU... ??

YEAH ?

PLEASE... BE *CAREFUL.*

HEY, AREN'T I AL-WAYS?

SLAM

PANT PANT

GOOD DOG, JUN. YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR MISTRESS, OKAY?

ARF!

YIP?

RRRGGG

RARF RARF RARF

BE SILENT!

RARF RARF RARF

AAAAAA
OOOOOO--ack

JUN--?!? IS SOMETHING WRONG, PUPPY?

OH, DEAR GOD--
NO!!

MOTHER, WHAT IS IT--?

IT'S JUN, DAUGHTER! HE'S... HE'S... DEAD!

THIS IS ALL HER FAULT! SOMEHOW SHE DID IT!

BUT HOW COULD SHE--? HOW COULD SHE MURDER AN INNOCENT DOG?!?

AND... AM I NEXT?

SO THERE YOU ARE.

MIND TELLING ME WHERE YOU'VE BEEN?

YES.

KNOCK

"BLOOD."

"SHE SMELLS OF BLOOD!"

"SATOMI!!"

SLAM

YOU LITTLE MONSTER! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO SATOMI?!

TELL ME, AZUSA! TELL ME NOW, OR I SWEAR I'LL--

PLEASE, YUZURU-- DON'T!! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT--!

DON'T LIE TO ME! I WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING!

BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN DOING ANY-THING!

PLEASE DON'T HURT ME, YUZU-RU...

PLEASE DON'T BE CRUEL!

EHUH EHUH EHUH

SLAM

HELLO ??

MAY I SPEAK TO SA-TOMI, PLEASE ??

HELLO ??

S-SA-TOMI...? OH, THANK GOD!

YUZURU, I'M SORRY...

...BUT I DON'T THINK I CAN COME TO SCHOOL ANY MORE!

WHAT ?!?

PLEASE, SA-TOMI-- TELL ME WHY!

IF IT'S SOME-THING AZUSA DID TO YOU--!

....

TELL ME, YUZURU... HAS SHE COME HOME?

YES... A LITTLE WHILE AGO. WHY?

I--I STILL WON'T GO TO SCHOOL TOMORROW-- BUT I WILL GO TO THE ARCHERY CLUB'S PRAC-TICE HALL...

...AT SIX P.M.!

WAIT FOR ME THERE-- BUT MAKE CERTAIN NOT TO BE SEEN BY HER!

OKAY-- SEE YOU THEN!

KLAK

AZUSA... ??

I THINK I'M FINALLY STARTING TO UNDER-STAND WHAT THEY ARE, DAUGHTER-- THOSE CREATURES WHO FOLLOW YOU!

THEY ARE THE ONES OF LEGEND...

...THOSE WHO ARE CALLED THE HUNGRY GHOSTS!

AND THEY LIVE IN THE SHADOWS-- WAITING FOR DEAD MEAT!

BECAUSE I AM DUTY-BOUND TO *PROTECT* THE SHIGA FAMILY--

--I HAVE BEEN *TOLER-ATING* THEM... UNTIL *NOW!*

BUT I JUST CAN'T *STAND* IT ANY MORE!

M-MOTHER--?!?

OH-- *AZUSA!*

FORGIVE ME, DAUGHTER-- BUT I CAN-NOT *ALLOW* YOU TO ACCEDE TO THE SHIGA *HEAD FAMILY!*

MOTHER, *DON'T!* YOU'RE *STRANGLING* ME--!!

I AM *SORRY,* MY CHILD-- BUT *THIS* HEAD FAMILY WILL END WITH *ME!*

NO! No!

I AM GOING TO BE YUZURU'S **BRIDE!!**

NO, YOU'RE NOT!!

YOU ARE A DEMON-- A DEMON !!!

GAAA

NO!!

MMOTTH-HHHH-ERRR!!

EHUH EHUH EHUH

IT WAS YOUR FAULT MOTHER-- ALL YOUR FAULT!

CHEE CHEE

CHEE CHEE

YES... YOU'RE RIGHT...

NO ONE CAN BE ALLOWED TO COME BETWEEN ME AND YUZURU...

...NOT MY OWN MOTHER...

...NO ONE...

NOT EVEN THAT FOOLISH GIRL IN SCHOOL...

CHEE CHEE CHEE

NO... ESPE-CIALLY NOT HER!

AREN'T YOU GOING HOME, YUZU-RU?

NO, NOT YET.

.....

SQUEEE

YUZURU...

SATOMI...
??

OH, YUZURU--I'M SO SCARED! SHE'S GOING TO KILL ME!!

AND IT APPEARS I SHOULD HAVE KILLED YOU SOONER!

AZUSA?

AAA

OH... MY... GOD!!

SSSS

SHOOP

THAP

THWUDD

THWUDD

CHEE

CHEE

CHEE

ENOUGH!!

FWOOSH

CHOK

MORE ARROWS, SATOMI! GIVE ME MORE ARROWS!!

COMING!

YUZURU...

I'M WARNING YOU, AZUSA-- KEEP AWAY FROM US!!

BUT WHY?

BECAUSE, WHATEVER YOU ARE, YOU ARE NOT AZUSA! YOU ARE NOT THE GIRL I ONCE CARED FOR!

SWIISH

WHY, YUZURU? WHY MUST YOU BE SO *CRUEL* ??

DO YOU REALLY *HATE* ME, YUZURU?

DO YOU REALLY HATE ME *THAT MUCH--* ?!?

DEAR GOD!!

NOOO !!!

*AAAA

FFWANG
UNHHH

UUNNHH

SHHHLIKKK

SHUSH

THUK

Y-YUZURU...?

P-PLEASE COME TO ME, YUZURU... I...I NEED YOU...

AZUSA-- ??

I AM YOURS, YUZURU... I WILL ALWAYS BE YOURS...

AZUSA, WHAT WERE THOSE THINGS?

PLEASE... DON'T HATE ME FOR WHAT I'VE DONE...

IT... IT WASN'T MY FAULT...

IT WAS THOSE LITTLE MONSTERS, WASN'T IT? THEY FORCED YOU TO DO THOSE TERRIBLE THINGS!

THEY USED YOU!

Y-YES... THAT'S RIGHT... IT WAS THEM... ALL THEIR FAULT...

"AFTER ALL... I LOVE YOU..."

"LIKE I PROMISED... I ALWAYS WOULD..."

YOU KNOW... THAT I WOULD NEVER HURT YOU, YU-ZURU...

THE END

END OF RUMIC WORLD TRILOGY VOLUME 1.